6 November 1970

Dear Harold:

There is no time now to answer your good letter of Oct. 19, but I can report that Hal is back. Actually he got back on Oct. 21, to find his firm was laying off people, including himself. He tells us this situation soon was clarified to the extent that he could not hope to be taken back until the first of next year, if then, because of the general business slump. He says, and we believe him, that his trip to Europe had nothing to do with it, that he would have been laid off anyway.

We had begun trying to reach him by telephone beginning around the 15th, and did not manage to do so until last Monday, Nov. 2. He had been out looking for work, of course, and not finding it.

In any case we arranged to go over to Oakland last night, where we took him to dinner and cleared up a few things, although not many.

He had a wonderful time in Europe, this is clear. He met Cheryl in Munich, they rented a car and drove down through Switzerland, along the French and Italian Rivieras to Genoa, then back up through Verona, Innsbruck and Salzburg and back to Munich.

She stayed on in Munich and now has gone to work for the U.S. Army there on the basis of her Civil Service rating. Doesn't like the work, but is having the fine time a young and beautiful American girl can have in such a setting. She does some modelling. Hal is frankly disappointed she wasn't willing to marry him and come back with him, but understands why she doesn't want to make any commitment now. He told us a little more about her which clears up a few things. Her parents were divorced when she was a child or young teenager, and she herself has been married and divorced. In other words, gunshy, and for good reason. Her mother was Jewish, which accounts for her poise and impeccable manners. You were correct, we think, in your diagnosis of a quest for a father figure, and we can all happily say goodbye to our direst forebodings. She's the nice girl she seems, just scared of getting mired down in another nasty domestic situation. She's 27, by the way, considerably older than she looks.

If Hal is hurt he does not show it. He is disappointed, as I said, but we're not sure he really expected much better. Right now he is preoccupied with looking for a job, is having to move out of his apartment (he plans to move in with some friend in San Francisco) to reduce expenses, and trying to catch up on things he has let slide for a month, like correspondence. He's quite penitent that he hasn't written to you, which he volunteered without our bringing it up in any way.

He knows in general that we have been writing back and forth, since he has the stuff from you that we forwarded to him. But he of course does not know we've been discussing him, and I can only suggest that aside from the fact that he's been in Europe anything he tells you will be news to you.

I should add that Hal seems much refreshed from his trip to Europe. He obviously enjoyed it very much, and seems somehow younger. Even with the jobless situation on his mind, he seemed more relaxed and open than we had seen him before. He's much concerned about finding a job, but suprisingly confident that he'll find something. In general he plans to get along on unemployment compensation if he has to, then after the first of the year do what he did once before, work for an income tax advisory outfit run by a friend of his. But what he really wants to do is to find a job more along his own line before then. For the time being, he seems to be doing okay.

I think that about brings you up to date. I do have a few things to say in reply to your letter of Oct. 16 which might be of some interest to you, but that will have to wait until I have more time.

Best from us both,

jdw